

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 PC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 /044 W

-----261505Z 052324 /43

R 261400Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5627

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY VICTORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 1085

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, KE

SUBJECT: KANU ELECTION PROSPECTS

REF: (A) NAIROBI A-02, (B) NAIROBI 0797

1. SUMMARY: KANU SOURCE STATES THAT VICE-PRESIDENT MOI'S FACTION HAS SLIGHT EDGE IN CONTEST TO CHOOSE NATIONAL PARTY LEADERS, BUT KIAMBU KIKUYU FACTION BACKING MUNGAI BELIEVES IT CAN OVERCOME THIS LEAD AND WILL BLOCK PARTY ELECTIONS UNTIL VICTORY ASSURED. SUPPORT FROM LUO TRIBAL AREA (NYANZA PROVINCE) FIGURES PROMINENTLY IN KIAMBU STRATEGY, EITHER THROUGH REPEAT OF LOCAL PARTY ELECTIONS OR ARM-TWISTING AMONG THOSE ELECTED LAST MONTH. SOURCE CLAIMS KENYATTA AND FAMILY ARE SOLIDLY BEHIND MUNGAI, BUT KENYATTA'S ACTIONS SO FAR HAVE BEEN INCONCLUSIVE. END SUMMARY.

2. KANU NATIONAL EXECTUVE OFFICER GAVE EMBOFF HIS VIEW OF STATE OF PLAY IN KANU ELECTION PROCESS IN CONVERSATION JANUARY 25. WHILE HE IS UNQUESTIONABLY WORKING FOR KIAMBU KIKUYU GROUP AGAINST VP MOI, HIS ANALYSIS HAS
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RING TOF TRUTH TO IT. ACCORDING THOS THIS KANU OFFICIAL, IF NATIONAL ELECTIONS WERE HELD TODAY, MOI'S GROUP WOULD WIN NARROWLY. HE SAID HE HAD ANALYZED LOCAL ELECTION RESULTS CONSTITUENCY BY CONSTITUENCY THROUGHOUT COUNTRY AND THAT MOI HAS SUPPORT OF TWO-THIRDS OR THREE QUARTERS OF DELEGATES FROM RIFT VALLEY AND NYANZA PROVINCES PLUS POCKETS OF SUPPORT ELSEWHERE.

3. HOWEVER, AS HE POINTED OUT, NATIONAL KANU ELECTIONS ARE NOT BEING HELD TODAY. THEY WILL ONLY TAKE PLACE, HE ASSERTED, IF AND WHEN IT IS CLEAR THAT KIAMBU KIKUYU GROUP HAS POSITIONED ITSELF TO WIN. THERE ARE PENDING BEFORE PRESIDENT KENYATTA NOW - PROPOSALS TO 1) DECLARE RECENTLY COMPLETED KANU ELECTIONS IN NYANZA PROVINCE NULL AND VOID ON GROUNDS OF IRREGULARITIES IN VOTING PROCEDURES; AND 2) PERMIT EX-KENYA PEOPLE'S UNION (KPU) LEADERS INCLUDING OGINGA ODINGA TO PARTICIPATE IN RESCHEDULED LOCAL KANU ELECTIONS IN NYANZA PROVINCE. SHOULD PRESIDENT KENYATTA APPROVE THESE PROPOSALS, EMBOFF WAS TOLD, IT WOULD BE EASY TO ARRANGE FOR OGINGA ODINGA-BACKED CANDIDATES, WHO WOULD WORK WITH KIAMBU KIKUYU GROUP, TO WIN. FAILING THIS, IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO "CHANGE THE MINDS" OF SOME ALREADY ELECTED DELEGATES, PARTICULARLY IN NYANZA PROVINCE. THE KANU NATIONAL EXECUTIVE OFFICER WAS CONVINCED THIS COULD BE DONE, BUT SUGGESTED IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT AND EXPENSIVE.

4. EMBOFF WAS TOLD THAT RUMOR MINISTER OF DEFENCE JAMES GICHURU WAS TO BE PUT UP TO CHALLENGE MOI FOR KANU VICE-PRESIDENCY WAS INACCURATE (SEE REFS). EX-FONMIN NJOROGI MUNGAI AND OTHER KIAMBU KIKUYU LEADERS WERE TOO SMART TO HAND MOI AND HIS ALLIES AN OBVIOUS RALLYING POINT AGAINST WOULD WOULD APPEAR TO BE EFFORT TO TURN KANU INTO A KIKUYU CLUB. THE STRATEGY, HE SAID, WAS TO SELECT A NON-KIKUYU, OTHER THAN MOI, TO CONTEST CONFIDENTIAL

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THE VICE PRESIDENCY OF THE PARTY. SUCH A PERSON COULD BE KAMBA LEADER PAUL NGEI, ABALUHYA LEADER MASINDE MULIRO, OR POSSIBLY ONE OF THE LUO LEADERS TO BE RESURRECTED IF THE BAN ON KPU PARTICIPATION IN KANU ELECTIONS IS REMOVED. IN ANY EVENT, NO FINAL DECISION, HE INDICATED, HAS YET BEEN TAKEN. THE OBJECTIVE WOULD BE TO SELECT THE MAN WHO BRINGS THE MOST SUPPORT TO THE "TICKET" AS A WHOLE. IN THIS VEIN, HE CONFIRMED THAT MUNGAI HIMSELF WISHES TO CONTEST THE NEW OFFICE OF NATIONAL PARTY CHAIRMAN, THIRD HIGHEST POST IN KANU.

4. WITH REGARD TO LOCAL ELECTIONS IN MOMBASA BRANCH WHICH ARE TO BE HELD JANUARY 29-31, KANU OFFICER ALLEGED THAT MOI GROUP IS EXPENDING VAST AMOUNT OF MONEY IN ALL-OUT ATTEMPT TO DEFEAT INCUMBENT GROUP, WHICH IS KNOWN TO SUPPORT MUNGAI. KENYATTA HIMSELF, HE SAID, HAD MADE DECISION THAT ELECTIONS IN MOMBASA SHOULD GO FORWARD DESPITE CLAIM BY INCUMBENT GROUP THAT PROPER ELECTIONS HAD BEEN HELD IN MARCH, 1976

(SEE REF (A)). ACCORDING TO KANU SOURCE, KIAMBU KIKUYU GROUP BEGAN COUNTER-OFFENSIVE JANUARY 22 BY DELIVERING 50,000 KANU MEMBERSHIP TICKETS TO INCUMBENT GROUP FOR DISTRIBUTION. HE BELIEVES MOMBASA ELECTION WILL BE CLOSE, BUT THAT MOI GROUP WILL FAIL TO TURN OUR INCUMBENTS.

5. THIS KANU SOURCE INSISTS IT IS CLEAR THAT PRESIDENT KENYATTA AND FAMILY SUPPORT DUMP-MOI EFFORT. HE CLAIMED PRESIDENT HAD TOLD HIM, AS SUPERVISOR OF NAIROBI BRANCH ELECTION, TO ENSURE MUNGAI WON OVER INCUMBENT CHARLES RUBIA, WHO WAS BACKED BY MOI. HE ALSO SAID THAT PRESIDENT KENYATTA LAST WEEK TOLD SON PETER KENYATTA TO STOP ASSISTING MOI. (PETER KENYATTA HAD BEEN ONLY MEMBER OF FAMILY TO OPENLY SUPPORT MOI IN BATTLE OVER EFFORT TO CHANGE KENYA'S CONSTITUTION TO READ MOI OUT OF SUCCESSION PICTURE).
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6. COMMENT: THESE COMMENTS BY KANU OFFICER DO NOT RESOLVE AMBIGUITIES IN EMBASSY'S READING OF KENYATTA'S PERSONAL STAND ON KANU ELECTIONS AND SUCCESSION. KENYATTA COULD WELL BE GIVING DIFFERENT SIGNALS TO DIFFERENT PEOPLE. FOR EXAMPLE, KENYATTA HAD IT IN HIS POWER TO GIVE KIAMBU KIKUYU GROUP CONTROL OF IMPORTANT MOMBASA BRANCH WITHOUT A NEW ELECTION, BUT HE APPARENTLY DECIDED TO LET ELECTIONS TAKE PLACE AND EXPOSE GROUP TO RISK OF DEFEAT. SIMILARLY, UNCERTAINTY AS TO WHETHER HE WILL HAVE NYANZA ELECTIONS REPEATED SUGGESTS THAT HIS POSITION IS NOT AS CLEAR CUT AS KANU SOURCE WOULD HAVE IT APPEAR.
MARSHALL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTIONS, POLITICAL PARTIES
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977NAIROB01085
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770028-0611
Format: TEL
From: NAIROBI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770116/aaaaaoez.tel
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Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 NAIROBI A-2, 77 NAIROBI 797
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3496725
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KANU ELECTION PROSPECTS
TAGS: PINT, KE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4d2708d1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009